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JOHN CROCKER FOOTE

BY RICHARD V. CARPENTER.

John Crocker Foote, a member of this society, departed this life at Belvidere, Illinois, July 12, 1917.

Mr. Foote was born in Hamilton, New York, September 20, 1841. His father, John J. Foote, was a man of prominence in central New York State about the time of the Civil War, being State Senator and afterward Auditor of the New York City Post Office, and much trusted by the leaders of those times.

The elder Foote founded the fortune which he accumulated, by a large drug business in Hamilton. John C. Foote continued that business in Belvidere after the family moved there in 1865, and long after he sold his store and retired to care for his large financial interests, he continued to take out a druggist's license and to keep posted upon the various changes in pharmacy and the prices of drugs and chemicals.

Mr. Foote was educated in Hamilton Academy and afterwards was graduated from Colgate University with the degree A. B. A short time before his death it was the pleasure of the writer to spend an evening in company with him and the president of Colgate, when Mr. Foote took great pleasure in reciting the events of his college course and furnishing the president of his Alma Mater with many first-hand details of early college history, among others the fact that considerable of the present university grounds formerly formed part of John J. Foote's homestead.

Mr. Foote was deeply interested in American history and genealogy, particularly as connected with the founders of the Republic. He was a member of the Mayflower

Society, his ancestor being John Howland, and contributed largely to the purchase and maintenance of the Howland House at Plymouth. He was one of the charter members of the Sons of the Revolution in the State of Illinois and one of the original eight founders of the society who attended the preliminary meeting of the organization held December 4, 1893. He held many offices in the society, so far as his residence in Belvidere, some distance from Chicago, would permit. Almost every year Mr. Foote contributed to that society the amount necessary for a life membership, designating some friend as the beneficiary without a preliminary consultation, and he delighted in surprising the friend by telling him of the life membership bestowed, after it had been done.

Mr. Foote was extremely interested in genealogy, particularly that of New England, and it was said of him by an intimate friend that no matter what topic the conversation started with, it always ended with genealogy. He contributed quite largely to the publication of the Foote genealogy, subscribing to quite a number of the books when the author of the genealogy was somewhat disheartened at the prospect of receiving sufficient encouragement. Mr. Foote often told the writer that he was glad to contribute in that manner, because otherwise he would have felt it was his duty to get up the genealogy himself, and if someone else was willing to do it, he was glad to help to that extent.

Mr. Foote was the soul of honor, carefulness and punctuality. Of all the men the writer of this article has known none excelled him in those particulars. If a meeting was set for half past seven in the evening, at 7:29 Mr. Foote's step would be heard at the bottom of the stairs. An engagement or a promise to him was sacred. In settling matters of several hundred thousand dollars he desired the balance to come absolutely correct, and a difference of one or two cents was not sufficient. It was not the value of the money, for he gave liberally to the causes in which he was interested, without its being hardly known, but it was the

principle of having the matter right, whether the difference was in his favor or against him.

For many years Mr. Foote lived in Belvidere, on the north bank of the Kishwaukee River, where he erected a beautiful home, which is still occupied by his widow, Mrs. Helen Garvin Foote. He was buried in the Belvidere cemetery.

He left three daughters, Mary Helen Foote Purinton, wife of Rev. Harry E. Purinton, of Denver, Colorado; Maria Garvin Foote Engstrom, wife of Alfred A. Engstrom of Rockford, Illinois; and Florence Annette Foote Engstrom, wife of Ebenezer Engstrom of Rockford, Illinois.

Mr. Foote, during his long life, occupied many of those positions which mark the respect and confidence held for the men who are able and willing to stand for the things that go for the betterment of the community. He was at his death an elder of the Presbyterian Church, vice-president of the People's Bank of Belvidere, and president of the board of trustees of Ida Public Library.

Mr. Foote's memory will always be held in love and esteem by those who knew him, and in his death this society has lost a true lover of American history and genealogy.